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stories of hope

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Event moves inside because of rain; message of hope for Gulf Coast not stopped

Photo by Lyle Ratliff

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

Worship at the Wharf was rained out of its venue but not out of its spirit. And certainly not out of its ongoing effect.

"Now that the event is over, we are partnering churches across America with churches along the coast who have been impacted by the oil spill," said Joe Savage, director of the center

for leadership development at the University of Mobile (UMobile), who was instrumental in organizing the event.

"People now are so desperate for us to come together again," he said. "They want to pray. They want to worship as one body of believers. We are currently praying and asking God to reveal what He desires next."

All of this came from the quickly organized Aug. 15 event (part of the Re-

storing Hope project) to benefit those affected by the oil spill. What was planned as a concert and worship time at Orange Beach's outdoor amphitheater at The Wharf was moved inside to Christian Life Church, Orange Beach, when a thunderstorm moved through the area.

And despite the weather, more than 2,000 people of all ages packed the church's sanctuary as event organizers

managed to start the program less than an hour after its original start time. A sprinkling of every age group shuffled around the outer edge of the mob of people standing shoulder-to-shoulder near the stage, but it was certainly the energetic young people bouncing and swaying to the music that made up the majority in attendance.

Sponsored by 54 area churches of (See 'Gulf,' page 3)

Alabama Baptists trim 2011 budget, prepare for new relief site

By Jennifer Davis Rash
The Alabama Baptist

The Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) has approved a \$43 million Cooperative Program (CP) budget proposal for 2011, is in the process of purchasing land to build a disaster relief command center and has restructured two of its offices.

Meeting Aug. 13 in Montgomery, SBOM members also approved designated giving budgets of \$300,000 for state causes and \$400,000 for the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). No challenge budget goal was offered because of difficult economic times.

Special offering goals also were ap-

proved, totaling \$20.9 million. They are Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions — \$11.5 million; Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions — \$6 million; Alabama Baptist Children's Homes & Family Ministries — \$2.5 million; World Hunger Offering — \$800,000; and Disaster Relief Offering — \$100,000.

Of the \$43 million proposed base budget, \$18,278,739 will go to the SBC, \$12,876,909 to the SBOM and \$11,844,352 to state convention entities.

The budget proposal will be (See 'State,' page 17)



Photo by Jennifer Davis Rash

FUTURE HOME OF ALABAMA DISASTER RELIEF — More than 4 acres of land are in the process of being purchased by the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions to build a disaster relief warehouse and command center.

Beginning next week ...

**AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT
GAMBLING IN ALABAMA**



an eight-week series

COMMENT

Salvation Means Faith, Not Feeling

Can you name a disciple of Jesus who demanded a certain kind of feeling before being willing to follow our Lord?

Can you name a disciple who asked Jesus to prove Himself by performing some kind of miracle before abandoning all to follow Him?

The Bible does not say how all of the 12 were called, but each case recorded in Scripture includes an interest in Jesus' message, an invitation and a response. Peter and Andrew were fishing when Jesus said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." The brothers immediately followed (Matt. 4:19).

James and John were working in their father's boat mending nets. Jesus called them and they responded (Matt. 4:22). Matthew left his tax counting table in response to Jesus' invitation (Matt. 9:9).

If the first disciples responded to a straightforward invitation to follow Jesus, then why do some people today insist on some kind of special feeling or sign before they will allow Jesus to be their Savior and follow Him?

An answer offered occasionally relates to the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, better known as the apostle Paul. Acts 9 relates Paul being suddenly overpowered by a bright light and hearing a voice that identified itself as Jesus. Paul was forced to the ground by the light and temporarily blinded. In response, this fierce persecutor of the church was transformed into a champion for Christ and a church planter par excellent.

'Irresistible kind of experience'

This unexpected irresistible kind of experience with Jesus is described by many as a "Damascus Road" experience, a reference to the road Paul was traveling when he had his encounter with the Lord. And some people say they will not accept Jesus as their personal Savior until they have a "Damascus Road"-type experience.

Overlooked in that statement is the fact that Paul was not seeking an experience with Jesus. Paul hated the One who had died on Calvary's cross. He was headed to Damascus to arrest and punish early believers. Paul's experience had nothing to do with Jesus fulfilling his wish for some kind of special spiritual experience.

But the Book of Acts, the closest thing to a history of the first-century church available, relates a different kind of experience for others who chose to believe in Jesus. Without fail, those who accepted Jesus as Savior heard the gospel message and responded to an invitation. The most common description of salvation in Acts is "they believed."

Acts 2 tells of the apostle Peter preaching in Jerusalem, where about 3,000 were converted. His message was simple: "Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ — this Jesus whom you cruci-



THOUGHTS By Bob Terry

fied" (36). Those who heard the message did not ask for a feeling. They simply asked, "What shall we do" (37). The scene closes with the observation "so then, those who had received his word were baptized" (41).

In Acts 8, Philip, one of the original seven deacons, was in the town of Samaria preaching about Jesus. Verse 12 says, "But when they believed ... they were baptized, men and women alike."

Later in the same chapter, this early deacon confronted an official from Ethiopia and "preached Jesus to him" (35). In response to the message, the Ethiopian asked what prevented him from being baptized. Philip responded, "If you believe with all your heart, you may" (37).

In each instance, the deciding issue was faith ("if you believe with all your heart"), not feeling about some unexplainable experience.

In Acts 11:21, the author described an evangelistic campaign at Antioch. He wrote, "The hand of the Lord was with them and a large number who believed turned to the Lord."

On Paul's first missionary journey, the Roman governor of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, who is described as "a man of intelligence," "believed" the message of the evangelist, "being amazed at the teaching of the Lord" (Acts 13:12).

Later on that journey, Paul preached to the Gentiles and "as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed" (48).

The first convert to Christianity in Europe under Paul's ministry was Lydia (Acts 16:14). Of her conversion, the writer recalled, "And the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul."

Emphasizing the message

Whether the presenter was Peter, Philip or Paul, the emphasis was always on the message. As the apostle John summarized, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through Him" (John 3:16-17).

The emphasis was always on faith, believing the message of the gospel, too.

When the Philippian jailer asked what he must

do to be saved, Paul and his missionary companion Silas responded, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31).

In Thessalonica, Paul preached in the synagogue and some of the Jews "were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas" (Acts 17:4).

At Berea, "many of them (Jews), therefore, believed along with a number of prominent Greek women and men" (Acts 17:12).

At Corinth, Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, "believed in the Lord ... and many of the Corinthians, when they heard, were believing and were baptized" (Acts 18:8).

From the beginning of Jesus' ministry to the close of the New Testament and even today, the process is always the same. Salvation begins with sharing the gospel. Whether it is preaching to thousands as Peter did at Pentecost, to a small group as Paul did at Philippi or a single soul as Philip did with the Ethiopian official makes no difference. The gospel must be shared.

'Open the heart'

As with Lydia, it is up to the Lord to "open the heart" to the message. The 3,000 believers at Pentecost believed because God's Holy Spirit "opened their hearts." So did the Ethiopian, the jailer, Crispus and all the others.

The "feeling" they had was the urge to believe, have faith in the gospel message and accept Jesus as personal Savior. That urge to believe is God's Spirit beckoning people to faith because faith — believing in Jesus with all your heart — is what salvation is all about.

THE
ALABAMA BAPTIST

"If ye continue in my word, then ... ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

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Someone You Should Know

By Christine Kapurch, Correspondent, TAB

Lloyd Garner

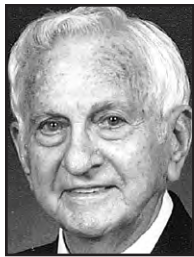
Angel Grove Baptist Church, Jacksonville
Calhoun Baptist Association

FAVORITE BIBLE VERSE: Philippians 4:13

FAVORITE HYMN: "Amazing Grace"

HOBBIES: Fishing, hunting and
woodwork

FAMILY STATUS: Married to Joy for 61
years; two children, Lloyd Michael
and Betty Louise; and four
grandchildren



GARNER

Lloyd Garner has taught Sunday School for 45 years. His "first classroom" was located under a shade tree on a bus.

Q: What was your childhood like?

A: I was born and raised in Georgia. My dad was a farmer and worked for Coca-Cola bottling company ... I finished high school in Rome (Ga.) and was drafted in 1944. Then I went through the Southeast Pacific all the way to Japan. I enlisted from the Army into the Army Air Corps, and I was a firefighter for 17 years in the Air Force.

Q: How did you come to know the Lord?

A: I was a sophomore in high school, and I went to North Rome Baptist Church. ... When I started home [one] night (from a spring revival), I got on the bridge by my house and the Lord said, "Go back to that church, and surrender your life to Christ." I remember running back to church just as a pastor was coming out, and I met him on the steps and surrendered right then.

Q: How have you been involved in church through the years?

A: I have taught Sunday School for 45 years. Joy and I have taught people of all ages. ... I've never had a bad assignment. The Lord was always there.

Q: What have you learned from this ministry?

A: Just do the best you can and just be satisfied and the Lord will put you wherever He wants you. As long as the Lord has us on earth, He gives us stuff to do to glorify Him.

Q: What difference has being a Christian made in your life?

A: It's a good life. My duty is to study His Word and pray, and He'll show me what He wants to do. I have a mission just like I did while I was in the Air Force.

Gulf Coast worship event offers prayer, hope to oil spill victims, area churches

(continued from page 1)

various denominations, Worship at the Wharf grew out of a vision of Savage and Joe Shirk of the contemporary Christian band Big Daddy Weave and First Baptist Church, North Mobile, in Saraland. Their vision combined with the desire of several area pastors and businessmen to respond to the devastation and discouragement along the Gulf Coast made for the perfect push to pull the event together.

While Big Daddy Weave was a definite on the schedule, five other Christian artists also participated in the concert-type worship time: Lindell Cooley, Deluge, Alicia Williams Garcia, Mark Harris and Nikeland Nichols. Wrapping up the event was Ed Litton, pastor of First, North Mobile.

Litton said he wanted to offer encouragement to those in the area going through a hard time. While sharing some of the tragic story of losing his first wife in an automobile accident, Litton built his message around Psalm 23.

"The churches down here are suffering," Litton told *The Alabama Baptist*. "The membership is leaving because they are having to find new jobs. Tithes and offerings are down. It is a ripple effect. But it's not only economical, it's psychological."

"We want to bring hope and encouragement with this event," Litton said. And with the hardships has come a unification of churches of all denominations, he said. "The people care in our churches and that's wonderful."

Savage pointed out that prayer for the Gulf Coast was central to the event and that "several dozen people prayed to receive Jesus."

While the event was free, an offering was taken and about \$15,000 has been collected so far, Savage said.

Litton explained the timing of the event coincided with students going back to school. There are always extra expenses getting ready to go back to school, he said. "We wanted to help people out."

The money raised will be used to buy gift cards to local grocery stores to purchase food. That way the event can assist the local economy as well as families in need, Litton noted.



Photos by Lyle Ratliff

WET BUT NOT WILTED — More than 2,000 people gather at Christian Life Church, Orange Beach, after being rained out of the outdoor worship event at The Wharf. More than 200 event volunteers helped make the transition smooth for the singers, bands and attendees.

The gift cards will be distributed through area churches, Savage said.

Churches in need of funds to distribute to people impacted by the oil spill can contact Savage at jsavage@umobile.edu for an application.

According to the www.restoringhopeproject.com website, a team of five business and church leaders has volunteered to oversee the disbursements. A local CPA, Mark Hieronymus from the firm of Wilkins, Miller, Hieronymus LLC in Mobile, "has agreed to voluntarily oversee all recordkeeping for the project," the website states.

"The one organization or entity along the Gulf Coast which is best suited to help families most in need is the local church," Savage said. "They know the greatest needs in the community, and they know who has those needs more than anyone else."



ALICIA WILLIAMS GARCIA

Knight leaves SBOM post for Montgomery pastorate

By Kristen Padilla
The Alabama Baptist

Teman Knight will be stepping down as director of the office of leadership and church health for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions (SBOM) to become pastor of Heritage Baptist Church, Montgomery. Mike Jackson will assume Knight's SBOM role (see story, page 1).

Heritage Baptist extended a call to Knight after a vote Aug. 15. He has served as interim pastor of the Montgomery Baptist Association church since November.

"He didn't intend to be our pastor, but we had a wonderful growing relationship with him," said Lee Wright, chairman of the pastor search committee. "He is a gifted teacher and preacher, and he is very keen in building strong relationships and family. Our church is very excited."

Knight said leaving the SBOM to become a pastor was "a long and difficult" journey.

"I have always enjoyed the ministry I have had as a state missionary. I love investing in pastors and church leaders and seeing them grow," he said. "The longer we served at

Heritage, however, the more we became invested in the people of the church and the stronger the vision for the church that God gave us became. The final results were that after months of ministry at Heritage that God made it clear to us that this was the direction that He wanted us to move in our service to Him."

Knight's service at the SBOM began in the evangelism office where he served as an associate for five years. In 2006, he transitioned into his current position.

"Teman Knight has offered Alabama Baptists exemplary service as a state missionary for almost 10 years," said Rick Lance, SBOM executive director. "[As director], he served as our liaison with New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and he has been one of our conference leaders and consultants in the vital areas of leadership development and church health.

"We wish the very best for Teman Knight and his family as they return to the pastor-

ate," Lance added. "Heritage Baptist Church has called an excellent pastor, and they have a bright future together. Our prayers are with them, and we look forward to serving as Great Commission ministers with them in the days to come."

A Louisiana native, Knight has more than 15 years experience as a pastor, having served York Terrace Baptist Church, Sheffield, and three churches in his home state. He also serves as an adjunct professor of Old Testament and Hebrew for New Orleans Seminary, where he earned his master of divinity and doctor of philosophy. He and his wife, Darlana, have two children.

"It has been a privilege to be part of building the kingdom of God all across the state of Alabama and helping Alabama Baptists fulfill the Great Commission," Knight said. "(I hope to help) Heritage become a church that leads people into a life-changing relationship with Christ in Montgomery and beyond by loving God, loving each other and by showing God's love to the world."



KNIGHT

NORTH AFRICA



North African believers pay heavy price for faith

Ibrahim wasn't ready to die. He wasn't ready to back down either.

For months, Islamic authorities had ignored the tiny house church he started with a handful of former Muslims in a dusty, desolate village on the outskirts of town. But the 26-year-old Arab farmer's brazen evangelism had become a problem. The church was growing and it was now turning too many heads and winning too many souls for authorities to overlook. Today they'd come to end it.

Ibrahim's eyes scanned the mob of about 20 men, led by the village's chief, Karim, sent to confront him. Ibrahim recognized many of the men's faces. They were his neighbors, even friends. Now as Karim's hired thugs, Ibrahim saw only hatred in their eyes. Armed with knives, machetes, spears and guns, the men stood ready to kill if necessary.

Acting on Karim's orders, the mob had already trashed the round kuzi (coo-zee) where Ibrahim and the other believers met for church, ripping apart the hut's thatch roof and smashing its mud-brick walls. Karim then turned his attention to a box of Bibles and study materials his men had taken from the church.

He was going to burn the Bibles. That's when something inside Ibrahim snapped.

"We're not going to let you burn those books," Ibrahim exclaimed as he charged from the huddle of believers to face off with the chief.

"You've become heretics in the way of Islam," Karim shot back. "You've become believers in Jesus. This would have been differ-

ent if you kept it to yourself, but you're telling other people and I can't allow that to happen."

As he argued with Karim, Ibrahim's mind flashed to passages in the Bible in which he'd read of the beheading of John the Baptist and the torture and crucifixion of Jesus. Ibrahim realized he wasn't afraid. He was, however, tired of talking.

Ibrahim grabbed the box of Scriptures from Karim, walked briskly back to the believers and calmly stared down the mob.

"We were full of the Holy Spirit," Ibrahim recounted. "We knew that if they threw a spear at us or stabbed us or shot us and we died, we would be in heaven."

The mob yelled at them, but a physical confrontation did not occur. Ibrahim and the believers mounted horses, rode a triumphant lap around the village and took off.

The victory was short-lived.

Witch hunt

Within days, the believers were ordered to appear for trial before the town's Islamic council. They knew it would be a witch hunt, run by 80 of the area's most powerful Muslim leaders. But the believers chose to go anyway. They weren't ashamed of the hope they had in Christ and wanted everyone to know it.

"We've called you here to hold Islamic court over you," explained the head imam, who presided over the council.

"How can you do that?" Ibrahim asked. "We're not Muslims."

For the next three days, the council grilled the believers about their belief in Jesus, why they had left Islam and why they so fervently shared the gospel with anyone who would listen.

Some of the most incriminating evidence came when the imam produced a gospel cassette that Karim had managed to steal from the church. The imam played the tape, a condensed version of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, for the entire council to hear. Most people in the audience laughed. Ibrahim smiled knowingly.

"We've really made it big," he whispered to one of the believers. "We're actually evangelizing all of the major religious leaders in town because they're listening to our tape."

In the end, the trial boiled down to a single question: "Will you return to Islam?"

The believers' answer was an unequivocal "no." They im-

mediately were banished from their village, the town and the entire county. To return was an automatic death sentence. Loudspeakers on the town's mosques blared the believers' names, publicly marking them as kuffar.

"It means you are absolutely worthless, an absolute heretic," Chuck Castle, a Southern Baptist doctor who runs a clinic in town, said. "You can't get jobs, you can't get married and no one will live with you. You are a complete outcast."

People were told not to meet, eat or drink with the believers. Worse, their marriages and children were now considered illegitimate. Even in death, they would remain outcasts; the burial rights to their family cemeteries were revoked.

Eight years ago, it was Castle who led Ibrahim to the Lord and disciplined him. But now, in a heartbreaking twist of circumstances, the doctor found himself helping Ibrahim leave the area. He was the only friend who volunteered to drive Ibrahim to the desert so he wouldn't have to make the 30-mile trek on foot. But taking his friend and church-planting partner to a place where he would be forced to live as a nomad is a painful memory, one that still brings tears to Castle's eyes.

"There was nothing out there," he said. "It's extremely hard when people that you helped lead to Christ are persecuted and you can't walk through that persecution with them. ... And you're broken on their behalf. You're also moved by the joy they show in evangelizing the very people that were persecuting them."

Barred from their homes, the believers and their families survived in ramshackle tents near the county border. Ibrahim's son was only a few months old at the time, and with no source of clean water, day-to-day life under the blistering North African sun was brutal. But being outcasts did come with one advantage: They were free to worship God. And He didn't forget them.

Homecoming

A year later, they received a surprise letter from Karim granting them permission to return home. There was no explanation but Ibrahim didn't need one. He knew God was giving them a new place to live just as He did for the Israelites after they wandered in the wilderness. Instead of moving back to their old village, the believers founded a new village a few miles away.

Now free from the fear of persecution and

living as the area's first and only Christian community, the believers' faith blossomed. But they soon realized they were missing something.

"God began to give us a vision to evangelize other peoples," Ibrahim said. "No matter how far it was, we wanted to go to that place and tell people about Jesus."

And they did. Today church members estimate they've shared the gospel with more than 5,000 people. At least 90 have been baptized. Under Ibrahim's leadership, the church itself

has grown from a group of 10 to more than 25 and is focused on evangelizing three major tribes.

What's more, the believers have come full circle with the chief who once tried to destroy them.

With the help of Castle and financial gifts from Southern Baptists, the church drilled a well at the village where the persecution began. The village's women used to travel more than four hours round

trip by donkey every day to get water. It wasn't always clean and often made people sick.

Capped wells cost about \$4,000. Villagers managed to raise \$1,000, and Southern Baptists paid the rest. Installed earlier this year, it's literally giving new life to the village, keeping children healthy and bringing back families who had moved away because of the lack of water.

Karim is baffled by the church's actions. It's no small irony the well is located less than 100 yards from the site where his men ripped apart the believers' hut.

"Why have you done this for us?" the chief asked Ibrahim and a handful of believers on a recent visit.

Amine, one of the believers who was persecuted with Ibrahim, answered Karim with a Bible reference about loving others more than yourself.

Karim nodded in agreement and smiled at the men he once considered killing. Though there is a lot of work to be done before Karim and others in the village are ready to surrender their lives to Jesus, Ibrahim and Castle believe the well has done much to repair their relationship and demonstrate Christ's love.

"Every day, I thank God for the well," Karim said. "If you don't have water, you can't work, you can't live. I'm very happy with Ibrahim and Amine for helping bring us this gift."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Some names have been changed. (BP)



HEARING THE GOSPEL — A classroom of North African men listens to a Southern Baptist representative explain the meaning of a Bible story the class is using to practice English pronunciation.

BP photo

Spiritual darkness covers North Africa

What comes to mind when you hear the words “North Africa”? Do you think about the pyramids in Egypt or the civil war in Sudan? Maybe the name conjures up images of people suffering from malnutrition and diseases like AIDS and malaria.

But what about the spiritual darkness in the region? Does that cross your mind?

According to the CIA World Factbook, five out of seven North African countries are at least 98 percent Muslim. Egypt is 90 percent Muslim, while Sudan is 70 percent Muslim.

The International Mission Board groups North Africa into its Arab World affinity bloc, along with West Asia. Affinity blocs are categories of people groups around the world based on similar language, history and culture.

Most of the people in the affinity blocs are usually native to a geographical location.

The Arab World affinity bloc has 670 people groups with more than 425 million people. Of these people groups,

- ▶ 581 groups — more than 417 million people — are unreached. This constitutes 98.2 percent of the total Arab World population.

- ▶ 552 groups — more than 279 million people — are considered last frontier (people groups who have not had an evangelical church started among them within the past two years).

- ▶ 479 groups — more than 411 million people — live in countries that are rated “not free” or “partly free” by Freedom House, an independent watchdog organization that measures freedom according to two broad categories: political rights and civil liberties, which include the freedoms of expression and belief.

- ▶ 156 groups — more than 159 million people — have Islam as their primary religion. An indefinite number of these groups is 100 percent Muslim.

- ▶ 121 groups — more than 14 million people — do not have Scripture available in their primary language.

(TAB)

Southern Baptist medical team meets North Africans physical, spiritual needs

Laila lies motionless in the sweltering heat of a remote medical clinic poised at the edge of the Sahara Desert.

Black flies swarm the young mother's face, feasting on the yellow infection that oozes from her eyes. An IV impales one of her arms; the other drapes limply over her swollen belly.

At six-and-a-half months pregnant, Laila is suffering from a severe case of measles. Though she is likely to recover, the disease is a virtual death sentence for her baby.

Jenny Byrd, a nurse practitioner from Georgia, watches over her. Speaking broken Arabic, Byrd caresses the Muslim woman's arm and tries to reassure her mother and husband who wait anxiously by her side. A simple vaccination would have prevented this tragedy, but Byrd knows the situation is now beyond medicine's reach. She closes her eyes and silently asks God for a miracle and the chance to explain why she came to North Africa.

Byrd is part of a team of Southern Baptist medical workers called TRUTH — Trailblazers Reaching the Unreached Through Healthcare. It shares Christ in an Islamic country so hostile to the gospel that its name can't be printed without risking the team's safety.

Chuck Castle, a family doctor from Texas, leads the team. After volunteering on a handful of short-term trips, Castle knew God wanted him serving overseas full time. By 1999, he and his wife, Debbie, were in North Africa, pioneering a medical ministry supported by the International Mission Board.

The need was staggering. More than 17,000 people live within a five-mile radius of the town where the Castles' ministry is based. Jobs are scarce so most families scrape by as farmers or nomads. Electricity and running water are luxuries, and with no sanitation, the town's streets reek of animal waste and rotting garbage.

Corruption

Corruption is rampant, even at the town's only hospital. Locals know it as the place “where people go to die.” Castle tells horror stories of doctors turning away surgery patients until they can provide supplies for their own operations or nurses charging extra to insert a patient's IV and then charging again to remove it.

But the town's physical needs pale in comparison with its spiritual poverty. When the Castles arrived, there were no churches of any kind or any known Christians. Folk Islam, a blend of teachings from the Quran with animism and ancestor worship, dominates the religious landscape.

“These people live in fear,” Castle said.



BP photo

“They're afraid of evil spirits, afraid of God. ... It can be overwhelming to be the only beacon of hope in such a dark place.”

Castle remembers the day he discovered just how deep that darkness was. When his next-door neighbor, Yusef, died, his funeral was like a glimpse into hell, Castle said.

Women were sobbing, covering themselves with dirt and ripping out their hair. Some were beaten by their husbands because their tears didn't “honor” Yusef's death. One of Castle's friends swallowed an amulet engraved with Quranic verses and collapsed in a seizure. Men rallied together to count the 99 names of Allah (the Muslim name of God) in hopes of giving Yusef an extra push toward heaven.

But Castle knew heaven wasn't where his Muslim friend was going. Though he had talked with Yusef about God, Castle hadn't yet asked him to decide to follow Christ. He thought he had more time.

“From that point forward, God got my attention and said, ‘This is urgent. You can't take for granted these people are going to be with you forever,’” he said.

Back at the clinic, that sense of urgency is obvious as Castle hustles to treat the crowd of about 30 people who fill his waiting room.

On an average day, he'll see patients with anything from headaches to terminal cancer. He points to dirty drinking water and mosquitoes, which fuel diseases like dysentery and malaria, as the culprits behind many of the clinic's visitors. Malnutrition is common; so is trauma — burns, cuts and broken bones.

Making matters worse, Castle said, is a stubborn reliance on traditional tribal medicine. He's seen old men who drink kerosene to calm an upset stomach, mothers who burn their babies' foreheads with hot coals to soothe colic and children with broken limbs that need amputation because they were splinted so tightly they became gangrenous.

Working together

Fortunately Castle doesn't handle all of these patients alone. Besides Byrd, the TRUTH team includes two registered nurses, a nutritionist and a handful of national nurses and pharmacists. Working together, they saw more than 6,000 patients in a six-month period, including 3,000 children, and administered more than 1,000 vaccinations.

As a doctor, Castle admits it would be easy to lose himself in the town's medical needs and neglect the real reason he came to North Africa. He wants his patients to know their need for spiritual healing is just as important as their need for physical healing, and he makes it a priority to personally share that message.

“Here, you treat someone and they get well, and two weeks later, they're dying again of the exact same thing because their water's bad,” Castle said. “Without an eternal solution to these problems, it's futile.”

With the help of the TRUTH team's national partners, the numbers have jumped from zero to more than 90 baptized believers and six house churches in less than 10 years.

Against the odds, Laila, the pregnant mother Byrd treated for measles, delivered her baby alive at seven months. He lived for about a week — a miracle, Byrd said, given Laila's illness and the lack of neonatal care. Byrd was invited to Laila's house to meet the child the day after he was born.

“I was able to pray with the family and tell them what a miracle their son was and Who gave them this gift,” Byrd said. “It's not [an ideal] ending, but Laila got to spend a week with a child that should have been stillborn.”

“We have to trust God and His sovereignty. Maybe He allowed this to happen so we could have the opportunity to tell her about Jesus and show her His love.”

EDITOR'S NOTE — Some names have been changed. (BP)



Across Alabama's Associations

BESSEMER

► **The Church at McAdory, McCalla**, will celebrate its fifth anniversary Sept. 12, 11 a.m., with Dewey Mayfield, former pastor of First Church, Bessemer. Lunch will follow. The Church at McAdory was formed by a merger of three Bessemer-area churches — Westside Church, South Highlands Church and First, Bessemer. Histories of the three churches will be on display as well as a documentary of the first five years of The Church at McAdory. For information call 205-477-8265. Bill McCall is pastor.

BIRMINGHAM

► **First Church, Sandusky**, in Birmingham, will host The Capstone Quartet, of Gordo, in concert Sept. 12, 6 p.m. For information call 205-798-4211. Herman Pair is pastor. ► Members and friends of the former **South Avondale Church, Birmingham**, will hold a reunion Sept. 25, 11 a.m., at First Church, Irondale. Sack lunches will be served. For reservations call Fannie Daniel at 205-956-5407 or e-mail lavellemw@charter.net.

CLARKE

► **Thomasville Church** will hold a celebration to honor Associate Pastor James Best for 60 years of ministry Sept. 12, 6 p.m., in the fellowship center. Best will resign from his position at the church following the celebration. Ty Parten is pastor.

COFFEE

► **Cool Springs Church, Enterprise**, will host Pure & Simple bluegrass band Aug. 29, 2 p.m. For information call 334-379-0133. Merlin Morris is pastor. ► **Park Avenue Church, Enterprise**, will hold a fifth Sunday night sing Aug. 29, 6 p.m., with Derek Snellgrove and Chosen. For information call 334-347-8264. Leon Adams is pastor.

COLUMBIA

► **Bay Springs Church, Dothan**, will host The Master's Men Quartet, of Milton, Fla., in concert Aug. 29, 6 p.m. A nursery will be provided. Scott E. Wyatt is pastor. ► **Southside Church, Dothan**, will host the simulcast event Living Proof Live with Beth Moore Sept. 18. Doors will open at 8 a.m. Praise and worship with Travis Cottrell will be at 9 a.m. Moore will speak at 9:30 a.m. Lunch will be provided. For tickets call 334-794-6794. Tommy White is interim pastor.

COOSA RIVER

► **Refuge Church, Lincoln**, will hold revival Sept. 13–15, nightly at 7, with Ken Maddox, pastor of Argo Church, Trussville. Joel Davis is pastor.

ELMORE

► **Tallaweka Church, Tallassee**, will host the contemporary female singing group Heart to Heart of Mount Hebron West Church, Elmore, Aug. 29, 6 p.m. Isaac Kervin is pastor.

FRANKLIN

► **North Russellville Church** will host a co-ed softball tournament Aug. 27–28 at the Lee Sports Complex. Proceeds will go to the church's children's ministry. For information call Jackie or Christy Hubbert at 256-332-4772. DeWayne Crumley is pastor.

GENEVA

► The 39er's C.L.U.B. of **Maple Avenue Church, Geneva**, will hold a luncheon meeting Sept. 14, 11 a.m., with Jim Mashburn, pastor of Poplar Head Methodist Church, Westville, Fla., and Darlington Methodist Church in Florida. For reservations call 334-684-9617 by Sept. 9. Mike Shirah is pastor.

HALE

► **Greensboro Church** will

hold a women's conference called Victoriously Frazzled Sept. 24–25 with author, speaker and entrepreneur Cindi Wood. Sessions will be Friday, 7–9 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m.–2 p.m. Lunch will be provided. Backhome (Jimmy and Jennifer Layne), of South Pittsburg, Tenn., will provide music. For tickets call 334-624-4343. Dee McGuire is pastor.

LIMESTONE

► **Clements Church, Athens**, will hold Harvest Sunday Aug. 29, 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., with Evangelist Junior Hill. For information call 256-729-1328 or visit www.clements baptist.org. Tim Anderson is pastor.

MOBILE

► **Cedar Creek Church, Mount Vernon**, will celebrate its 100th anniversary Aug. 29, 11 a.m. Lunch will follow. ► **First Church, Semmes**, will celebrate homecoming Aug. 29, 10:30 a.m. Alben Gaston is pastor.

MORGAN

► **Southwest Church, Hartsville**, will host the Strait Way Quartet Aug. 29, 5 p.m. Dewitt Crowe is pastor.

NORTH JEFFERSON

► **Scott Harmon** is the new administrator of administration and education for **First Church, Mount Olive**. He comes from Sale Street Church, Lake Charles, La. Harmon holds a bachelor's degree from Clemson University in South Carolina and master of religious education from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He and his wife, Kathy, have two children. Doug Moore is pastor. ► **Glenn's Chapel**

Church, Gardendale

will hold a special day Aug. 29 to honor long-time church members Bill and Hazel Marsh for many years of service to the church and community. The service will be at 11 a.m. Lunch will follow at noon. The Royal Master southern gospel quartet will sing at 1:30 p.m. Thomas Perkins is pastor.

RUSSELL

► **Shiloh Church, Opelika**, will host Christian humorist/musician Brother Billy Bob Bohannon Sept. 12, 11 a.m. R.L. Cole is pastor.

SAND MOUNTAIN

► **Sylvania Church** will honor Russell Wilks Aug. 29, 2–4 p.m., as he retires after approximately 60 years in the ministry. He serves as volunteer music minister/choir director for the church. Wilks also served Henagar Church until 1990. There will be singing and refreshments. David Starling is pastor.

WEST CULLMAN

► **Jerry W. Cole** is the new pastoral ministries assistant for



COLE

First Church, Cullman. He served as a missionary to Taiwan for 26 years. He also served churches in Alabama, Kentucky and Michigan. Cole and his wife, Sandy, have two children and nine grandchildren. Ed Hayes is pastor.

Hymn Society honors Samford professor of music Richardson

Samford University professor of music Paul Richardson was among those recently honored for their accomplishments in the field of church music by the Hymn Society in the United States and Canada. The honorees were recognized at the society's annual conference, held on the Samford campus in Birmingham and hosted by the school's division of music in July. The weeklong gathering included hymn festivals, practicum sectionals for tune and text writers, plenary speakers and worship services.

Richardson was named a fellow of the society, along with David Music and Paul Powell. He is the author of numerous works, including a history of Baptist hymnody in America, which he co-wrote with Music. He also served on the editorial board for the new Celebrating

Grace Hymnal and has contributed to several other hymnals and hymnal companion works, including The Baptist Hymnal (1992) and The New Century Hymnal Companion (1998). He is a graduate of Mars Hill College in North Carolina and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and has done postgraduate work at the Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester and Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School, both in New York.

Music is a professor of church music at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. Powell is the author of "Wherever He Leads I'll Go."

The Richmond, Va.-based society describes itself as "an organization of member pastors, musicians, scholars, poets, composers and other hymn lovers." (ABP)

Want to know God?

By Pastor Terry Sutton
First Baptist Church, Montevallo

There are some things about God that we may never fully understand until we face Him in eternity; however, the Bible teaches us that God can be known through Jesus Christ and that He taught us through His earthly life what God is really like.

In Luke 15, Jesus drew for us three portraits of the character and essence of God. He enabled us to view God in a clear and beautiful way through the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin. The third story is one of great interest to most people because it is referred to as the parable of the prodigal son; however, it clearly communicates what God is like. This story tells us that the God of all creation is like the father in this story. Jesus enabled us to see the beauty of the character of God through this parable.

In this story, Jesus said God is a loving father who will let you walk away from fellowship with Him but it breaks His heart when you do so. Jesus concluded this story of how God responds by telling how the father watches and waits with great anticipation for his son to return. When he sees him coming down the road, he runs to him and receives him with open arms, a kiss and a party.

There are different interpretations as to the meaning of the prodigal son, but no one can dispute the nature of God in this story. He is patient and loving.

In his short story "The Capital of the World," Ernest Hemingway tells a joke about a father who went to Madrid and placed an ad in the newspaper. It said, "Paco, meet me at Hotel Montana noon Tuesday. All is forgiven. Papa." Since Paco is a rather common name in Spain, 800 young men showed up to receive the forgiveness of their fathers.

God can be known and as your Father, He is waiting for your return to offer His forgiveness and love.

Alabama Ministries

Bethlehem and Pine Barren Bible Institute

► Bethlehem and Pine Barren Baptist associations, along with the extension division of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University in Birmingham, have opened registration for the fall semester of the Bethlehem and Pine Barren Bible Institute.

The course, Know the Truth, will meet every Tuesday from 6–8 p.m. at the Bethlehem Association office in Frisco City beginning Sept. 14.

To register or for more infor-

mation, call 251-267-3875 or send an e-mail to amy@bethlehem-pinebarren.com.

Westwood Ballet

► Westwood Ballet, a ministry of Westwood Baptist Church, Forestdale, has opened its fall registration.

Registration forms can be downloaded from www.wbclive.com. Classes begin Aug. 30 and registration will remain open until classes are full.

For more information, contact Cindy Best at 205-798-0900 or arts@wbclive.com.

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Back to School Brings Ministry Opportunities

“Back to school” — three words that have special meaning for teachers, students, parents and school administrators across Alabama as elementary, middle, high school and college campuses come to life with classes, activities, sporting events and all the excitement of a new beginning. I remember that great feeling of being able to make a fresh start at the beginning of a new school year. As a student it usually meant the grades, relationships and missteps of the past could be forgotten and the blank page of a new year was in front of me waiting to be written.

For those who minister to students across our state, there is no more exciting time than the beginning of a new school year. Their blank page means new students, new opportunities and the prospect of helping students discover faith in Jesus Christ and then what it means to make faith

their own, grow in that faith and learn to share it with others.

Baptist Campus Ministries (BCM) has been Alabama Baptists' evangelistic outpost on college and university campuses for almost 90 years. Over the years, BCM has reached thousands of students for Christ, watched students grow into strong Christian leaders and sent them out to mission fields around the world. Partnering with youth ministers in Baptist churches and associations, BCM is working to intentionally connect high school graduates to campus ministries and to the local church in a way that will help them remain strong in their faith during their college years and beyond.

Here are at least three ways Alabama Baptists can play a critical role in our efforts to reach more than 260,000 college students who will head back to school this month:

- First, you can pray. It sounds

simple, but it is perhaps the most important thing we can do. Pray for campus ministers and church collegiate ministers. Pray that students will be open to the Gospel, and pray that Christian students will be bold and faithful in their witness.

- Second, invest. Invest in the life of a college student in your church. Your small investment of a home-cooked meal, a listening ear and some time to care will pay off in ways that only eternity can measure.

- Third, work. College and young adult Bible classes need our best teachers and leaders. Find a place of service in your church or association.

It's also important to remember that the work of our Baptist

Campus Ministries is made possible by the faithful giving of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program. Back to school this year and every year means Great Commission Ministries at work through Baptist Campus Ministries

on Alabama's college and university campuses.

Mike

Nuss is director of the Office of

Collegiate & Student Ministries and



By Mike Nuss
State Missionary

may be reached at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 276, mnuss@alsbom.org. Also check online for the State Board of Missions' youth and collegiate ministries website: www.theStudentHub.org

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Youth
ministry
leaders &
parents

check THIS out...
www.sbccampusconnect.net

For more information, contact State Missionary Keith Loomis at kloomis@alsbom.org or 1.800.264.1225, ext. 280.



The Acts 1:8 Challenge is an opportunity for Southern Baptist churches to commit to a comprehensive missions strategy in their community (Jerusalem), state (Judea), continent (Samaria) and world (ends of the earth).

Acts 1:8 Connections is an opportunity to learn how your church can develop a missions strategy and hear about opportunities for missions service. Representatives from the Office of Global Missions, the North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board and missions volunteers will be sharing about future missions connecting points.

September 7, 2010:

Morning Session: Millbrook Baptist Church, 3431 Browns Rd., Millbrook, AL 36054-2417; (334) 285-4731; millbrookbaptist.org

Evening Session: Canaan Baptist Church, 2543 Morgan Rd., Bessemer, AL 35022-5036; (205) 425-4381; www.canaanbaptist.net

September 9, 2010:

Morning Session: East Gadsden Baptist Church, 211 N. 6th St., Gadsden, AL 35903-1640; (256) 543-7300; www.egbaptist.org

Evening Session: Lindsay Lane Baptist Church, 1300 Lindsay Ln. S, Athens, AL 35613-2708; (256) 232-0020; www.lindsaylane.org

Morning sessions, 9 a.m.- noon (lunch provided). Evening sessions, 5:30-8:30 p.m., (box supper provided).

Pre-registration is required. To register, please contact Ministry Assistant Sheron Poole at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 298. The \$5 registration fee per person may be mailed to: Office of Global Missions, Acts 1:8 Connections, P.O. Box 11870, Montgomery, AL 36111-0870.

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If you didn't attend Sunday School leader training at Shocco Springs, consider one of these area conferences. These conferences include 1-1/2 hours worth of training to help you improve your ability to communicate biblical truths as a teacher/facilitator while fostering a sense of community through meaningful ministry in a Sunday School class or Bible study group.

For more information, please contact State Missionary Jamie Baldwin at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 240, jbalwin@alsbom.org.

- Calvary Baptist Church, Scottsboro Thursday, Sept. 2
- First Baptist Church, Bay Minette Thursday, Sept. 2
- Meadow Brook Baptist Church, Gadsden Tuesday, Sept. 14
- First Baptist Church, Albertville Thursday, Sept. 16
- Highland Baptist Church, Florence Tuesday, Sept. 21
- Santuck Baptist Church, Wetumpka Tuesday, Sept. 28

Communicating Truth and Building Community

The Bivocational Pastor's Compensation

Many bivocational churches still operate under the old "lump sum" or "package approach."

In effect, they say to a pastor, other minister or prospective staff members: "We will pay you 'X' number of dollars — and you divide it any way you wish." This method can cause the minister to pay much more in taxes.

FOUR BEST PRACTICES

Here are four easy ways to help your minister save on taxes, avoid confusion, help keep good church employees and honor the Lord in our stewardship:

1. Adopt an accountable reimbursement plan. In the past, many churches set aside an amount designated as car allowance with no requirement for the minister to account to the church for mileage or other travel expenses. According to the IRS, such an allowance is indeed taxable income and must be reported on the W-2. The minister will pay taxes on this money which, if it had been provided through accountable reimbursements, wouldn't even be considered income but rather a business expense of the church.

To solve this dilemma, establish an accountable reimbursement plan: The church establishes a budget, and the minister provides a report each month of mileage showing the date, location, purpose and number of business miles traveled. The report also includes receipts for other business

expenses, such as attending workshops or conventions, books or tapes used in ministry, continuing education and hospitality. The minister could, for example, take a prospective family out to lunch to tell them more about the church, ascertain their spiritual needs, answer their questions, etc. This would be a legitimate business expense. Note: An accountable reimbursement plan cannot be funded through salary reduction.

2. Provide benefits. The church could provide term life insurance, health insurance, disability insurance and may offer other benefits such as dental and vision. These benefits protect the minister's family and also protect the church from the potential of a catastrophic expense. GuideStone Financial Resources provides such insurance products. More information is available through your State Board of Missions. (Call the number below for more information.)

3. Retirement through GuideStone is a wonderful way to provide for your minister's future. Bivocational ministers should participate even if they have retirement through their other employment. There are potentially three additional benefits for ministers of Southern Baptist churches in Alabama, including a survivor benefit of up to \$100,000, a disability benefit of up to \$500 per month, and up to an additional \$17.50 going into the minister's

retirement account each month.

These additional benefits are provided through the State Board of Missions and your Cooperative Program gifts. If the church budget offerings are less than \$75,000, the minister may also apply for the Mission/Church Assistance Program which could result in an additional \$50 per month in the minister's retirement account for up to five years. Also, amounts the minister sets aside for retirement through a salary reduction agreement may qualify for a retirement savings contribution credit on federal taxes.

the minister to keep detailed records and receipts to be ready to prove the exclusion.

A minister may exclude from federal income tax and state income tax the smallest of three numbers: (1) the amount designated by the church, (2) actual expenses or (3) the fair market rental value of the home furnished plus utilities. If the exclusion is less than the allowance designated, the minister must report the excess as taxable income.

A minister in a parsonage may also have a housing allowance to cover expenses for which he may be responsible such as utilities, content insurance, furnishings, cleaning supplies for the home, pest control, etc. Many churches do not provide a housing allowance for

a minister living in a parsonage.

Many bivocational pastors could request up to 100% of their income as housing. It is recommended that even if that is reasonable, the pastor request less than 100% so that he can participate in the Church Retirement Plan through GuideStone Financial Resources.

For more information, please contact State Missionary Lee Wright at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 241, or lwright@alsbom.org.

By Lee Wright
State Missionary



4. Provide a housing allowance. The housing allowance may include the payment (principal, interest, taxes and insurance), utilities, upkeep, maintenance, and improvements, furnishings, pest control, cleaning supplies for the home, homeowners association dues and down payment.

The housing allowance is requested by the minister and approved by the church. The church's role is to determine that the request is reasonable and approve it. Many churches put unreasonable limits on the housing allowance. It is the responsibility of

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E-zekiel Web Training Workshop

Thursday, Sept. 30, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd., Montgomery

Join E-zekiel trainer and director of customer services Dacia Gulledge as she demonstrates how to use E-zekiel to build and maintain a great website.

Come learn all the tips and tricks to make an effective and user-friendly website quickly and easily!

Lunch will be provided.

Cost: \$40 for Alabama Baptists and \$50 for all others, if registered before Sept. 15. \$50 after the Sept. 15 deadline.

To register or for more information, go to www.alsbom.org/webtraining, or contact State Missionary Chris Mills, 1-800-264-1225, ext. 310, cmills@alsbom.org.

IMPACT:
to have an
immediate
and powerful
effect on
something or
someone



When a blacksmith pounds a piece of heated iron on his anvil, the force of the impact shapes the metal into a useful object and changes it forever. As Christians, we have the opportunity to have the same kind of transforming impact on the lives of those around us.



MPACT Alabama is a weekend designated for students, student ministry groups, BCM groups, churches and associations all across Alabama to focus on the ministry needs of their local community and share a Gospel witness.

Some ideas might include caring for the elderly, sharing the Gospel door to door, holding a fifth quarter rally for local school students, raking leaves for homebound church members, holding an evangelistic block party, organizing or restocking a local food pantry, ministering to international families in your community, painting or fixing up a neighbor's home, serving your community by volunteering for the job nobody else wants to do... it's all up to you!

MPACT
alabama:
to have an
immediate and
powerful
effect on *your*
community for
the cause of
CHRIST!

There are hundreds of thousands of students across Alabama who can make a powerful, positive and eternal **MPACT** on their local mission field. Will you and your students join that force of Great Commission Christians and make an **MPACT** this year?

For more information, contact your local Baptist association or the Office of Collegiate and Student Ministries, Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions, **1.800.264.1225**, ext. **276**.

www.thestudenthub.org

This resource is made possible by gifts of Alabama Baptists through the Cooperative Program.

CALLED TO COMMUNICATE

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4
9 A.M.—4 P.M.



Danny Wood,
pastor,
Shades Mountain
Baptist Church,
Birmingham



Frank Page, pastor,
president and chief
executive officer,
SBC Executive
Committee



Worship Leaders
Michael &
Linda Adler,
Shades Mountain
Baptist Church

Take Your Preaching • Speaking • Teaching to the Next Level of Effectiveness

Our annual "Called to Communicate" conference is expected to draw another capacity crowd to the Baptist Building, 2001 E. South Blvd., Montgomery, on November 4.

LEADERS:

- Danny Wood, pastor, Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham
- Frank Page, president and chief executive officer, SBC Executive Committee.
- Michael and Linda Adler, Shades Mountain Baptist Church, Birmingham. Michael is SMBC's worship pastor, and both Michael and Linda are professional vocal coaches and former members of TRUTH.

COST: \$20 (covers all materials, lunch and breaks)

Some of the potential topics to be considered:

- Spiritual preparation for preaching, speaking, teaching.
- What style of preaching, speaking, teaching is truly effective in changing lives? Is one style more effective than another? Is "style" an appropriate consideration?
- What about the content of preaching, speaking, teaching? What tools do effective communicators use to prepare to preach, speak, teach?
- Why the truth of the Word of God continues to be the message we must deliver. Why we must continue to work diligently at the task due to the importance of it.

To register or for more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Jamie Allen at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 256, jallen@alsbom.org.

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SHIFT

REACHING FAMILIES THROUGH STUDENT MINISTRY

Speaker: Brian Haynes, associate pastor, Kingsland Baptist Church, Katy, Texas; author of "SHIFT: What it takes to finally reach families today"

A one-day training event for all student ministry leaders, children's ministers, pastors and anyone interested in helping reach families

The cost of \$10 per person includes lunch, book and conference materials. To register for the event call Angelle Saba at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 275. For more information, call Kyle Wiltshire at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 415, kwiltshire@alsbom.org or Eileen Mitchell, ext. 319, emitchell@alsbom.org.

This conference is made possible by gifts from Alabama Baptist churches through the Cooperative Program.

Nominations Sought for Outstanding Mission Volunteer



The Office of Global Missions of the State Board of Missions would like to honor an Outstanding 2010 Missions Volunteer. Your help is welcome.

Please think about lay people who are worthy of such recognition, and let us hear from you. We realize there are many who could fit this requirement. However, for this purpose only one individual or

couple will be selected.

Your recommendation will make a difference. The following information is required for a person or couple to be considered:

1. The name, address and phone number of the person or couple being nominated.
2. The name of the pastor, church and association, with address and phone number, to

which he/she/they belong.

3. A list of volunteer mission service based on Acts 1:8 (projects in their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and Uttermost that he/she/they have participated in during the past five years, including locations and dates). If the nominee(s) has not served in at least three of the Acts 1:8 areas, please do not nominate that person.

4. Statements supporting your nomination as Outstanding 2010 Mission Volunteer (why you feel he/she/they should be recognized in this manner).

5. Your signature with address, phone, church and association.

PLEASE NOTE: No phone calls or e-mail recommendations and/or

endorsements accepted.

DEADLINE: Nominations must be received (not postmarked) no later than Friday, September 24, 2010.

To request your Information Sheet and Nomination Application, please contact

By Reggie Quimby
State Missionary



Ministry Assistant Virginia Gardner at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 238, vgardner@alsbom.org or write: Global Missions Office, P.O. Box 11870, Montgomery, AL 36111-0870.

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Nominations Sought for Leadership Award

The Troy L. Morrison Leadership/Church Health Award has become a significant recognition since its inception in 1999. During the first three years of its existence, the award was presented in two categories: New Work and Established Work. In 2002, the award was expanded to include a minister from a Bivocational Work.

Persons who would like to submit nominations for the award need to call the



Office of Leadership & Church Health to obtain criteria for nominees and a nominating form.

Completed nomination forms should be sent to the Office of Leadership & Church Health prior to October 29, 2010. The presentation of the awards will be made at the 2010 annual meeting of the Alabama Baptist State Convention in November at Hunter Street Baptist Church in Hoover.

For more information, please contact Ministry Assistant Jamie Allen at 1-800-264-1225, ext. 256, jallen@alsbom.org.

SENIOR ADULT CHOIR FESTIVALS
Thursday and Friday, October 21-22

These events will be held on October 21 at Green Valley Baptist Church, Birmingham, and Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery, and on October 22 at First Baptist Church, Fairhope, and Providence Baptist Church, Opelika.

For a registration form or for other information, please call 1-800-264-1225: State Missionary Keith Hibbs, ext. 217, khibbs@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Susan Corley, ext. 279, scorley@alsbom.org or go to www.alsbom.org/seniorfest.

NEWSONG 2011 TOUR
Friday through Sunday, January 7-9, 2011

NewSong, the 7th & 8th grade honor choir, will feature Ed Cleveland as guest clinician. The cost of \$225 is payable by December 12, 2010 (includes music, shirt, local bus transportation, meals and activity). Students must arrange transportation to Shocco Springs and from Albertville. Audition forms and CDs are due by November 12. Notifications will be sent out by November 19.

For a tentative schedule and other details, please call 1-800-264-1225: State Missionary Keith Hibbs, ext. 217, khibbs@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Susan Corley, ext. 279, scorley@alsbom.org or go to www.alsbom.org/newsong.

ALL-STATE CHILDREN'S HONOR CHOIR TOUR
Friday through Saturday, March 4-6, 2011

The Alabama All-State Children's Honor Choir is beginning its 12th year. The members will be chosen by audition from some of the finest young musicians in our state. There will be four regional rehearsals, and then the group will come together for joint rehearsals and concerts March 4-6, 2011, in the areas of Panama City and Enterprise. Check online at www.alsbom.org/chc-tour for specifics as updated information is posted.

Older children in grades 4, 5 and 6 who are actively involved in a children's choir are eligible to audition. Selection of honor choir members will be based on an audition CD and the completion of required registration forms (available online). Directors must submit a recorded audition of the children (one CD for all voices) from their church, using the material on the registration form.

Audition form, CD and agreement form are due in the Office of Worship Leadership & Church Music no later than November 1. Please rehearse your children before taping them. More rehearsal time means a better audition and a better indication of the child's vocal talent.

The total cost for the trip is tentatively set at \$200 (includes bus transportation while on tour, meals, two nights' lodging, music packet and two t-shirts to be worn during performances). This money will be due by February 1.

Please select only your best singers and well-behaved children who demonstrate a high degree of cooperation and respect for leadership. Please enlist a chaperone for every 3-4 children, preferably a Children's Honor Choir parent (same gender). Choir members will wear khaki pants, dark loafers/dress shoes with their commemorative shirt for the concerts.

The conductor will be Jane Burdeshaw of Montgomery, and the accompanist will be Deb Anderson of Selma. For more information, please call 1-800-264-1225: Music Specialist Karen Gosselin, ext. 318, kgosselin@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Cindy Parrish, ext. 230, cparrish@alsbom.org.

KEYBOARD FESTIVALS
November 5, 6, 7, 9, 13, 14

Dates and locations include: November 5, First Baptist Church, Huntsville, 2-6 p.m.; November 6, Meadow Brook Baptist Church, Birmingham, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.; November 7, First Baptist Church, Gadsden, 2-5 p.m.; November 9, First Baptist Church, Enterprise, 3-6 p.m.; November 9, Government Street Baptist Church, Mobile, 2-6 p.m.; November 13, Parkview Baptist Church, Eufaula, 8 a.m.-3 p.m.; and November 14, Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Gordo, 2-4 p.m. The cost will be \$5 per student (money to be turned in by the teacher).

For categories, requirements, a registration form or other information, please call 1-800-264-1225: Music Specialist Karen Gosselin, ext. 318, kgosselin@alsbom.org or Ministry Assistant Susan Corley, ext. 279, scorley@alsbom.org or go to www.alsbom.org/keyfest.

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MY CUP,
LORD



"I SHALL LIFT UP THE
CUP OF MY SALVATION AND
CALL UPON THE NAME OF THE LORD."

PSALM 116:13 NIV

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Historical Highlights

from previous issues of *The Alabama Baptist*

Compiled by Kathleen Prude

50 Years Ago August 1960

MK Receives School Award: At his high school graduation in Baguio, Philippines, Douglas Olive, son of Dr. and Mrs. Howard D. Olive, Southern Baptist missionaries with the Foreign Mission Board, was the recipient of the Bishop's Award, which is given to the student "making the greatest contribution to the school." Douglas, who was licensed to preach by Aurora Hill Baptist Church, Baguio, in April, will enter Howard College in Birmingham this fall. His family is returning to the states for furlough this summer and will also be at Howard, where Dr. Olive will be a visiting professor. (EDITOR'S NOTE — *Twenty years later in July 1980, H. Douglas Olive Jr. became the pastor of Dalraida Baptist Church, Montgomery.*)

40 Years Ago August 1970

'Greatest Revival' Held: Efforts of the East Cullman Youth Fellowship and East Side Baptist Church, Cullman, have resulted in one of the "greatest revivals in the history of the church." According to Jimmy Taylor, pastor of East Side Baptist, attendance increased to such an extent that the church installed closed-circuit television in the basement area and finally the services were moved to Cullman High School stadium to accommodate the crowds. More than 400 young people took part in a parade for "inner peace" in downtown Cullman and participated in a rally for the closing service. The revival resulted in 256 professions of faith in 27 area churches and 410 rededications. Taylor said the young

people of the youth fellowship have proved to their churches and community what a group of dedicated Christian young people can do when it works for Christ.

30 Years Ago August 1980

Summer Missionaries Serve in N.Y.: Sarah Bell, a student at Auburn University, and David Reed, a student at the University of Montevallo, are working in the state of New York this summer in a program sponsored by the Home Mission Board. Bell is a member of First Baptist Church, Scottsboro, and is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Bell. Reed is a member of Mount Olive Baptist Church near Sprott and is the son of Rev. and Mrs. Rayburn Reed, of Selma. Rev. Reed is pastor of Mount Olive Baptist. Bell and Reed are two of four students from the South working with mission youth programs throughout New York state.

20 Years Ago August 1990

Students Help Restore Church: Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions Baptist campus ministry associate Oxford Smith, Troy State University campus minister Ken May and five college students from Alabama joined a team of six college students from Kentucky in helping renovate a building in Leningrad. The building originally was a Russian Orthodox cathedral. With the Communist takeover, the building became a factory warehouse, was bombed during World War II and fell into disuse following the war. Alabama students who

assisted in the missions project were Wayne Denton, Hueytown, Faulkner State University; Rick Floyd, Milton, Fla., University of South Alabama; Brett McEwen, Trussville, Samford University; Stephen Newton, Madison, Auburn University; and David Sumner, Ashford, Jacksonville State University.

10 Years Ago August 2000

Teens Reach Hispanic Children, Others: Six teens and four adults from First Baptist Church, Vernon, traveled to Clinton, N.C., to work with children of Hispanic migrant workers. They directed backyard Bible clubs for these boys and girls. They also visited a nursing home and two homes for developmentally disabled adults. There the teens performed puppet shows, sang solos, told Bible stories and led songs. Along with their leaders, they also sorted clothing for Eastern Baptist Association's clothes closet and led in worship at First Baptist Church, Clinton.

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Restored church bell to ring as Center Hill marks 150 years

Sometime between 1900 and 1920, the congregation of Center Hill Baptist Church, Hanceville, purchased a cast-iron bell. Its ring was heard throughout the community, drawing people to worship. Then rust and age silenced the bell.

Until now.

When the East Cullman Baptist Association church celebrates its 150th anniversary Sept. 5, a restored bell will peal from its new home in a 10-foot belfry located beside the church.

"It means a lot to me; it's part of our heritage. The saints who have gone on to glory heard this bell; it was a part of their lives," said church member Richard Jesse, who led the restoration of the bell.

Early memories

The bell and other elements like pews figure into some of the earliest memories of 79-year-old Hue Smith, one of the oldest regularly attending male members of Center Hill Baptist.

"I was born and raised in this church," Smith said. "As I remember my first church going, momma put me on a blanket under the bench during the church service."

It's good to remember the past, according to Pastor Delbert Freeman.

"We should be learning from

the lessons of our past," said Freeman, who plans to preach Sept. 5 on Jeremiah 6:16 in which the Lord tells the people of Judah to "stand where the roads cross and look around. Ask where the old paths are. Ask for the good path and walk on it."

'Godly heritage'

Freeman said his message is a call to "return to our godly heritage as a Christian community and build on what made our country great."

The 10 a.m.-2 p.m. celebration also will include a presentation on the history of the church. Center Hill's new outdoor pavilion will host a fish fry and music from a bluegrass gospel band.

While celebrating the past, the church, which averages between 100 and 120 people in Sunday morning worship, is building for the future with new ministries like a men's ministry, which has grown from six to 25, and updated facilities like a renovated sanctuary, which reminds Freeman of a red velvet cake with its red and white color scheme.

"It is one of the most beautiful churches I've ever seen," Smith added. "We're proud of it."

For more information, call Freeman at 256-747-3210.

(TAB)

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FOR INFORMATION ABOUT PLACING A CLASSIFIED AD, CALL THE ADVERTISING DEPARTMENT OF THE ALABAMA BAPTIST, 205-870-4720, EXT. 102, OR E-MAIL ADS@THEALABAMABAPTIST.ORG. COPY DEADLINE IS TWO WEEKS BEFORE PUBLICATION.

CHURCH POSITIONS

PASTOR: Collins Chapel Baptist Church is currently seeking resumés for a full-time or bivocational Southern Baptist pastor. Please send resumés to: Pastor Search Committee, 14366 County Road 29, Jemison, AL 35085.

PASTOR: Calvary Baptist Church currently accepting resumés through Oct. 29 for full-time experienced Southern Baptist pastor. Mail resumés: Calvary Baptist Church, P.O. Box 740236, Tusculumbia, AL 35674.

PASTOR: Marshall Baptist Church is seeking a full-time pastor. Send resumé to: pastorsearch@marshallchurch.org or Marshall Baptist Church, ATTN: Search Committee, 436 Marshall Church Road NE, Thomson, GA 30824.

BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR: Midway Baptist Church in the Trussville area is seeking a bivocational pastor. Please mail resumés to: Pulpit Committee, Midway Baptist Church, 5901 Chalkville Mountain Road, Birmingham, AL 35235.

BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC: First Baptist Church of Shawmut is seeking a bivocational minister of music. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, 2300 23rd Drive, Valley, AL

36854.

BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC/WORSHIP LEADER: First Baptist Church, Rogersville, Ala., is currently seeking a bivocational minister of music/worship leader. Please send all resumés to: First Baptist Church, Rogersville, 222 College Street, Rogersville, AL 35652.

MINISTER TO MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: Full-time staff position: Parkview Baptist Church, Lake City, Fla. Primary responsibility — minister to middle/high school students with other areas of responsibility dependent upon individual giftedness. Submit questions and resumés to: parkviewbc@bellsouth.net.

PART-TIME STUDENT MINISTER: Liberty Hill Baptist seeking part-time student minister. Send resumé to: kent@libertyhillonline.org or mail to: LHBC, 5800 Co. Rd. 37, Clanton, AL 35045.

OTHER POSITIONS

CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER DIRECTOR: Full-time Director of Providence Child Development Center. Mail resumés to: Personnel Committee, CDC Director, Providence Baptist Church, 2807 Lee Road 166, Opelika,

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Samford, UMobile rank among best colleges

Two Alabama Baptist universities found a spot in *U.S. News & World Report's* 2011 rankings of Best Colleges released Aug. 17.

Samford University in Birmingham is ranked in the top tier of national universities. Samford rose 12 spots from last year to 104th. It shares that spot with Florida State University in Tallahassee, Howard University in Washington, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the University of New Hampshire in Durham and the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

Samford compared favorably with the other Alabama universities classified as national universities. The University of Alabama (tied for 79th) and Auburn University (85th) rank ahead of Samford, while the University of Alabama at Birmingham (151st) and the University of Alabama in Huntsville (179th) come in lower. Baylor University in Waco, Texas, (tied for 76th) is the only other Baptist institution in the classification.

Samford also was ranked as one of the top 20 national universities for graduates with the least debt at graduation.

Recognizing Samford

"While these rankings are only one measure of a university's success, it is obvious that Samford's growing national reputation is being recognized both by our peer institutions and by those who choose to rank the nation's top universities," President Andrew Westmoreland said. "The latest rankings also reflect the hard work of our faculty, staff, students, alumni and friends to achieve the highest quality academic standards while maintaining Samford's

unique Christian mission."

The University of Mobile (UMobile) is ranked 59th in the top tier of the best regional universities in the South. It tied with Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, North Georgia College & State University in Dahlonega and Saint Leo University in Florida.

UMobile President Mark Foley said, "I am grateful that the efforts the University of Mobile is making to achieve our objectives and high standards in the integration of faith and learning have resulted in this recognition. We take this as an affirmation of the distinctives of the University of Mobile experience in the lives of our students."

Other Alabama universities ranked in this category are Spring Hill College in Mobile (17th), the University of Montevallo (tied for 40th), the University of South Alabama in Mobile (52nd), Troy University (65th), the University of North Alabama in Florence (tied for 66th), Auburn University at Montgomery (tied for 74th) and Jacksonville State University (tied for 83rd). UMobile was one of several Baptist institutions ranked in this category.

The magazine's annual college rankings are based on classifications established by The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. More than 1,400 higher education institutions then are grouped in four categories: national universities, national liberal arts colleges, regional universities and regional colleges. Schools in the universities-master's and baccalaureate categories are ranked in four geographic regions.

For more information, visit www.usnews.com and click on the Education tab. (SU, TAB)

"We take this as an affirmation of the distinctives of the University of Mobile experience in the lives of our students."

Mark Foley
UMobile president

State Board reorganizes offices of Sunday School, discipleship

(continued from page 1)

presented to messengers attending the November Alabama Baptist State Convention (ABSC) in Birmingham for approval.

The 2011 budget proposal reflects a \$3 million reduction from the 2010 budget, said Rick Lance, SBOM executive director.

"This budget proposal is fiscally conservative in that the proposed expenditures reflect comprehensive research on past giving patterns and projected Cooperative Program gifts for 2011. The ... proposal is a responsible, realistic view of where we are with receipts," he said, noting, "nothing happened at the June (SBC) convention which will affect the budget we are presenting."

"We are not structuring based on action taking place at the SBC level," Lance said. "Those matters have yet to work their way through the system, through the trustees at IMB (the International Mission Board) and NAMB (the North American Mission Board)."

If the cooperative funding agreements between NAMB and the state conventions are dissolved, then "we feel confident we can absorb the first year plus in cooperative agreements," he said. As far as how SBOM staff funded by NAMB will be impacted if that money is taken away or what happens in the area of church planting, Lance said, "We have not gotten there yet."

'Living within means'

And while the ABSC does not have the largest budget among state conventions, it continues to lead the nation in SBC giving, he said, noting "we are \$1.8 million ahead of the next convention."

Still "we are facing the reality of doing more with less" and focusing on Great Commission ministries "with an eye toward mission critical effectiveness," he explained.

But in doing the work, "we are living within our means."

One example of that is the 4.87 acres of land currently being purchased for less than \$200,000 to build a disaster relief command center, said Scotty Hogan, pastor of Westmeade Baptist Church, De-

catur, and chairman of the SBOM properties subcommittee.

"Last year, the convention authorized the property (sub)committee to look for off-site land to do staging for disaster relief and to build a warehouse to store (the SBOM's) disaster relief equipment," Hogan said. The convention approved an amount up to \$500,000 to purchase the property and build the facility, he noted.

The land is being purchased from the Prattville Area Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee.

Mel Johnson, SBOM disaster relief strategist, said while the warehouse will be used to store disaster relief equipment and resources when not in use, it also can be used for donations of water and supplies during times of disaster once the equipment has been deployed.

"There will also be facilities to host incident command teams should NAMB need to come in and coordinate a multistate event," he said. "It could serve as the headquarters to coordinate a nationwide effort."

Bobby DuBois, SBOM associate executive director, verified the SBOM will be able to pay cash for the property and the new building as long as the cost doesn't exceed \$500,000. "We reserved \$250,000 to apply toward that debt (in a capital line item in both 2009 and 2010)," he said. "\$500,000 is sitting ready right now."

The goal is for disaster relief resources to be in the new facility by mid-2011, DuBois noted.

Bill Hart, pastor of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Ozark, and chairman of the relief ministries subcommittee, said the disaster relief property is not being purchased in conjunction with any potential relocation property for the SBOM. "This is just for disaster relief."

Hogan added that the case over the sale of the SBOM's Taylor Road property in east Montgomery (which the SBOM has decided to sell rather than build on) is awaiting the judge's ruling.

In other news, Lance announced Aug. 18 that two SBOM offices will merge into one, effective Sept. 15. Teman Knight recently resigned as director of the office of leadership and church health (see story, page 3). Instead of bringing in a new person, the SBOM is moving Mike Jackson, director of the office of discipleship and

family ministries, to that position.

At the same time, the office of discipleship and family ministries will merge with the office of Sunday School and Bible study ministries to become the office of Sunday School and discipleship.

"At this strategic time, we have decided to streamline a bit by merging two offices," Lance said. "Daniel Edmonds, who has served faithfully and skillfully as our Sunday School office director since 2001, will likewise serve as the director of the new office."

"Mike Jackson will do well as the new director of the office of leadership and church health," Lance added. "He's a veteran leader who has served very effectively as a state missionary."

"Before coming to the State Board of Missions, Mike (a pastor for almost 18 years) worked closely with the office he will now direct. Then after coming to our staff (in 2004 as an associate in the office of evangelism), Mike has collaborated regularly with Teman Knight as a facilitator and leader in various leadership conferences," Lance said. "He will be an effective leader and encourager of leaders for our churches."

Jackson said he is excited about the chance to help Alabama Baptists develop as leaders.

"As I come on board ... I want to continue with some of the events that are planned. ... [But we'll also] be doing some evaluation of our leadership offerings," he said.

Rick Ellison, who currently serves as an associate in the office of Sunday School, will join Jackson as an associate. Jamie Baldwin, James Blakeney, Eileen Mitchell and Sonya Tucker will remain associates in the new office of Sunday School and discipleship.

"This reconfiguring allows us to continue our practice of faithfulness and frugality regarding personnel and will reduce our number of full-time employees to 94," Lance noted. There were 119 SBOM employees when he came as executive director in 1999.

Through attrition and retirement, Lance has steadily led the SBOM to reduce the number of staff while maintaining its ability to continue the work taking place in its three major strategic priorities: evangelism and discipleship, leadership development and missions mobilization.

(Kristen Padilla and Keith Hinson contributed)



We are facing ... doing more with less ... with an eye toward mission critical effectiveness."

Rick Lance
SBOM executive director

CORRECTION

The Aug. 5 article "Montgomery churches minister to Mixtecs in city" incorrectly explained the makeup of the Montgomery Baptist Association Mixtec ministry. The ministry is actually organized through a task force of five groups — Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Montgomery; Yarborough Street Baptist Church, Montgomery; Ridgecrest Baptist Church, Montgomery; Community of Hope and Forest Park Ministry Center.

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SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

For August 29

Explore the Bible By Robert Olsen

Assistant Professor, School of Christian Studies, University of Mobile

RELATIONSHIPS: THE IMPROVEMENT FACTOR

2 Corinthians 10:1-3, 15-18; 12:14-21

Approach Courageously (10:1-3)

The letter's tone changes in these last three chapters. Up to this point, Paul had been defending himself cautiously. In these last sections, Paul became more forceful in his argumentation. He responded to some accusations that he was timid in person but forceful in tone in his letters. To this group of accusers, Paul's apostolic authority was in question because of this perceived duplicity. Furthermore some in Corinth had accused Paul of preaching according to the world's standards. He responded to the first accusation by explaining that his goal was for the Corinthians to deal with the matters he addressed in his letters so that when he arrived in Corinth, he would not have to spend time disciplining members. To those who claimed that Paul lived by the world's standards, he explained that though he was human, he did not use human methods to wage war. It is clear that Paul was trying to preserve his friendship with the Corinthian church, but more importantly, he was trying to follow God's commands. If he needed to be bold with the believers there, then he would be bold. In our relationships with others, are we likely to try to keep the peace by ignoring ungodly behavior or are we willing to confront it in order to affirm godly attitudes and actions? It is imperative that we try to preserve our Christian relations but not if it means overlooking ungodly behavior.

Challenge With God's Work (10:15-18)

Paul was concerned about improving his relationship with all of the believers in Corinth, even those who were critical of him. He wanted to have a unified body in that church so that he could concentrate on expanding his evangelistic endeavors to areas beyond. It is likely that Paul hoped that through spiritual maturity, the Corinthians would be able to support him as he took the gospel to other areas, and he was specific in telling them his hope. Likewise, if we are in the midst of a struggling relationship with another believer, then we may need

to identify how both parties can join together in a new phase of God's work.

Declare Any Concerns (12:14-18)

In order to demonstrate his love and concern for the Corinthians, Paul told them that he did not plan on being a burden. Just as with his former visits, he would refuse to take any money from them. This showed how much Paul did not want anyone to get the wrong idea — that he was interested in them solely for what he could get from them. But just as parents save up an inheritance for their children, Paul, as the spiritual parent of this church, refused to take anything from them, instead spending himself on them. In pleading his innocence, he even mentioned when Titus, his co-worker, came to Corinth and did not take anything from the believers there either. Just as Paul tried to clear up any misconceptions with the Corinthians in order to effect reconciliation, we also should seek to bring about resolution with our fellow Christians in order that the body of Christ might be unified and glorify God. We may need to take initiative in broaching the divide, just as Paul did.

Seek to Strengthen (12:19-21)

Paul's main concern was not so much that he be considered innocent before the Corinthians but in the sight of God. At several junctures in this letter, Paul stated that he was speaking before God, showing them how serious these issues were. Paul was not trying to merely win a human argument; he was showing that his actions were in line with God's desires. Paul expressed his concern that when he returned to Corinth, the church there would be in disarray, which would humiliate him in front of the believers with whom he might be traveling (see 2 Corinthians 9:3-5). Not only would this humiliate Paul but he would also have to humiliate any Corinthians who were sinning, which he obviously did not want to do. For each of us, when we are confronted with broken relationships in our churches, we need to do our best to make sure that we are biblical in our approach to reconciliation and try to convince the offended party of our innocence before God.

Bible Studies for Life By James Barnette

Associate Professor, Department of Religion, Samford University

FACE CRISES WITH COURAGE 2 Samuel 15:13-14, 24-26, 30-37; 19:7-8a

Continue to Trust God (15:13-14, 24-26)

David realized that a coup was in motion and "the hearts of the men of Israel [were] with Absalom" (13). Discerning the gravity of the situation, David recognized that he was facing a crisis unlike any other that he had encountered. He knew that the same Absalom who killed Amnon would kill his brothers and, quite possibly, him. Now for the first time, David, the mighty king and premier military leader, was forced to issue orders for his family, officials and bodyguard to flee. His concern extended to all inhabitants of Jerusalem. If Absalom attacked the city, then hundreds of innocent people would be slaughtered. To protect his people, David abandoned the throne. David had always been a big supporter of the Levites (1 Sam. 22:20-23) and had given them high authority in his administration. Now, in the king's own moment of crisis, Zadok and other Levites were there to offer him support. David had overseen the triumphant entry of the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. Now it appeared that he would have to oversee the departure of the Ark from the holy city. Zadok and the Levites had carried the Ark away in order to bolster David's claim to the throne. However, he instructed Zadok to take the Ark back into the city. He did not want the Ark of God treated like a good-luck charm as in the days of Eli when the glory departed from Israel. David had no desire to manipulate God. Rather, in his moment of trial, David cast himself completely on the will of God. He was prepared to entrust himself to God's way and take the outcome that was willed for him.

Don't Isolate Yourself From Others (15:30-37)

David led his loyalists up the Mount of Olives, moving eastward toward the Jordan River. He made no attempt to disguise his grief. Covering the head and going barefoot were symbols of sorrow and despair in ancient Israel. Although he was a strong and coura-

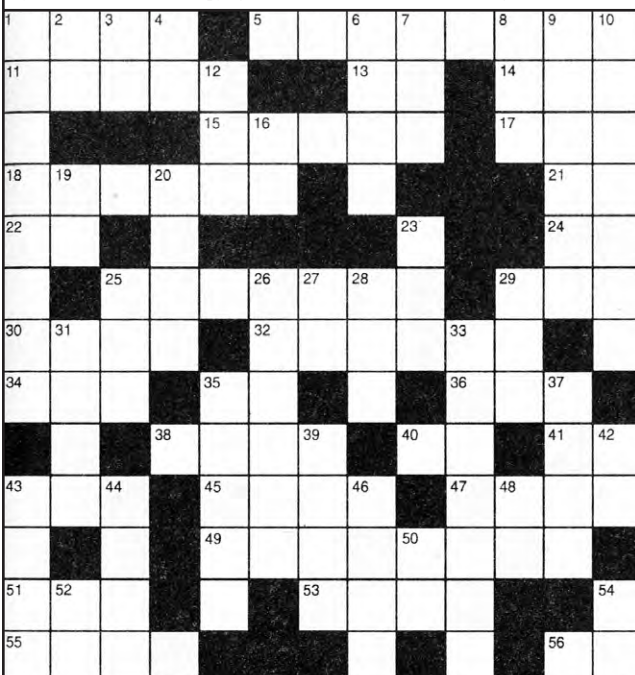
geous man, David wept openly. He wrote of shedding tears in Psalm 6, which might well have been an exile psalm. Adding to his distress was the news that Ahithophel, his most important counselor, was now aligned with Absalom. What do you do when one of your closest confidants betrays you? It is best to do what David did: pray. Soon thereafter, God answered David's prayer with the appearance of Hushai the Arkite, who displayed his solidarity with David by appearing before him with his robe torn and dust on his head. Hushai desired to go with David, but David told him that doing so would be a "burden." Each person who joined David's cause added to the practical issues of providing enough food, shelter and protection. Some have suggested that Hushai's age would have slowed David's movements from place to place as he avoided Absalom. Ever the strategist, David instructed Hushai to return to Jerusalem, pledge allegiance to Absalom and act as a mole in Absalom's inner circle. Zadok and Abiathar would serve as two of David's additional "plants," though their priestly roles would keep them away from the palace. Any information that Hushai gleaned from within the palace would be passed on to Zadok and Abiathar and their sons would carry it to David.

Fulfill Your Responsibilities (19:7-8a)

David's general, Joab, witnessed the king dressed as a mourner and heard the cries of sorrow as he entered Jerusalem. Joab knew firsthand that David's grief over Absalom's death was demoralizing to the troops. They had fought to restore David to the throne, yet he appeared to show ingratitude and contempt. Joab found such behavior both inexcusable and intolerable. To snap David out of his funk, Joab addressed him with tough words that no one else dared to say. Joab's talk was tougher than even Nathan's (2 Sam. 12:1-15) and certainly more direct. He scolded the king for not celebrating and showing gratitude. David responded to Joab's tough words, proceeding to sit at the gateway, which signified a return to normalcy. In this moment of crisis, it was Joab's clearheaded toughness that saved the throne for David.

Christian Crossword

By Arlene Walker Copyright 1994 ©Barbour Publishing Inc.



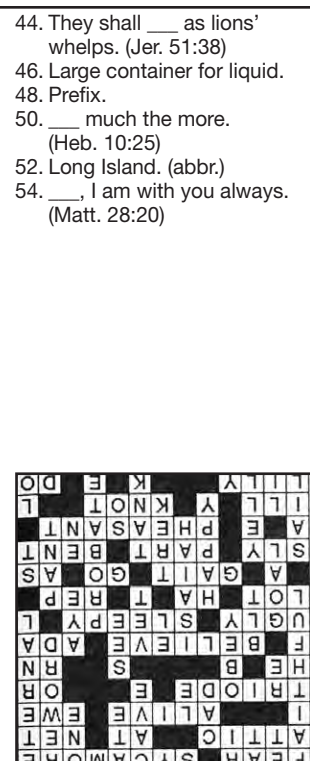
Across

- not. (Gen. 15:1)
- Climbed up into a ___ tree. (Luke 19:4; modern sp.)
- Storage under roof of a house.
- ___ the right hand of God. (Rom. 8:34)
- Cast the ___ on the right side. (John 21:6)
- ___ unto God. (Rom. 6:11)
- One little ___ lamb. (2 Sam. 12:3)
- Three electrodes in an electron tube.
- Good ___ bad. (2 Cor. 5:10)
- ___ answered. (John 9:36)
- Registered nurse. (abbr.)
- Shalt ___ in thine heart. (Rom. 10:9)
- A woman's name.
- Repulsive.
- Drowsy.
- Thou maintainest my ___. (Ps. 16:5)
- He saith among the trumpets, ___.

- Past tense of "eat."
- Love ___ another. (1 John 4:7)
- Put in other words.
- Words of ___ life. (John 6:68)
- Ungentlemanly.
- Last Entry. (abbr.)
- In the case of.
- My son, ___ my voice. (Gen. 27:8)
- They shall ___ God. (Matt. 5:8)
- Bacon, lettuce and tomato. (abbr.)
- O.T. prophet who wrote about the Messiah.
- Short for "elevated railway."
- Short for "veterinarian."
- Yes.
- Purpose.
- Prove validity of a will.
- ___ are ye if ye do them. (John 13:17)
- So ___ eth my soul after thee, O God. (Ps. 42:1)
- Journey.
- Street. (abbr.)
- That we should ___ into Italy. (Acts 27:1)

Down

- in that which is least. (Luke 16:10)
- Suffix meaning "little."
- Many shall rejoice ___ his birth. (Luke 1:14)
- Rhode Island. (abbr.)
- Buried him in the ___. (Gen. 50:13)



Baptist educators' leader reflects on term of service

A few years ago, a Baptist woman in her mid-20s traveled to China on a missions trip, decided to look up a young Chinese woman she had corresponded with in high school via the Universal Pen Pal Project and ended up leading her to the Lord.

When Paul Reitzer steps down this year as president of the 600-member strong Fellowship of Baptist Educators (FBE), those are the kinds of stories that will remind him of why he stepped up in the first place.

The pen pal project, which facilitates correspondence between Christian teens in North America and international students who want to practice English, is just one of several FBE ministries that he feels has helped further the Great Commission exactly as intended.

Reitzer, a former history professor at Charleston Southern University in South Carolina, and a former vice president for academic affairs at Judson College in Marion, became president of the organization in 2007.

He stayed on an extra year — the president serves a two-year term — because the vice presi-

dent was unable to take on the position because of health reasons.

Of course, Reitzer previously served as vice president and treasurer. And as pastor of both Newbern Baptist Church and Mount Olive Baptist Church, Sprott, in Cahaba Baptist Association, he coordinates the efforts of churches in Cahaba and Selma associations to collect Christian literature for FBE's Book-Link Inc. ministry, which ships the mate-

rial to missionaries, pastors and librarians in more than 40 countries.

"Paul has been responsible for helping us to broaden our scope," said John Carter, FBE executive director emeritus. "He's done a great job."

For his part, Reitzer deflects any praise back to the function and purpose of the fellowship itself.

"I don't pat myself on the back," he said. "I've enjoyed serving and I'm just convinced that [FBE] is a great organization."

For more information, visit www.shelby.net/~baptisteducators. (TAB)

"I don't pat myself on the back. ... I've enjoyed serving."

Paul Reitzer
FBE



SBC Representatives Around the World

During the summer months, we hosted two different missions teams, both from Illinois. The first team, from First Baptist Church, Litchfield, brought more than 40 teens and adults. They focused their attention on service evangelism by partnering with local community organizations such as DuBois Garden Club and the Downtown DuBois Revitalization Group. One such project involved our church restoring a walkway bridge that is greatly used by the community. The second missions team, from Kaskaskia Baptist Association, brought nearly 60 teens and adults. They focused their work on offering various backyard Bible clubs throughout the area. This ministry was especially vital since we were not only able to create a new means of developing relationships in the community but we were also able to train and to utilize members of our church in doing children's ministry. The work of the missions teams this summer was so helpful because they were able to accomplish in a two-week span what would have taken our church months to accomplish. Also the work of these partner churches opened doors of opportunity for

new churches to be planted in surrounding communities in the future. We cannot say enough about the exciting things that we have continued to witness God doing in our midst over this past year.

As we approach the fall semester, we have very exciting news to share with you. As of Oct. 3, we will continue our service in ministry in Adel, Ga. Springhead Baptist Church, Adel (near Valdosta), recently called Jason as pastor of its congregation. Springhead is a growing, vibrant church in Adel that is expanding as the region around Valdosta grows.

Please pray

▶ for our family as we are in this transition time of leaving our place of service in Pennsylvania and moving to our new place of service in Georgia.

▶ for the congregation of Summit View Church as they begin this transition period of filling leadership roles so that they may continue in the church's mission.

▶ for the congregation of Springhead Baptist Church in Adel, Ga., as they will be preparing for our arrival. Pray for a continued excitement and spirit of unity as we will be making our transition there.

▶ for the Conemaugh Valley Baptist Association and the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey as they will be assisting Summit View Church during this transition period.

▶ for the continued growth of Summit View Church and the future expansion of its mission to reach the Greater DuBois area, along with starting new churches throughout western Pennsylvania.

Jason, Genée and Josiah Duckett
DuBois, Pa.

On Aug. 13, we had a True Love Waits seminar at Philippine Normal University. I had a memorable conversation with one particular student after the event. She told me she had lost faith and was living in rebellion against God (she was openly homosexual). I could see a great deal of pain in her eyes. She listened intently as I told her the good news — that Jesus Christ has paid the price for her sins and has the power to completely change her life. We've kept in touch through cell phone, and she's agreed to meet with us for Bible study. Pray for her.

Kevin Sanders
Manila, Philippines

Movie Reviews

By Matthew Stephens

Amish Grace

Director Gregg Champion

"Amish Grace" is an inspirational and moving movie about compassion and forgiveness. It is based on the true story of the tragic shootings at the Amish school in Nickel Mines, Pa., in October 2006.

The movie focuses on how the survivors are coping with the loss of their loved ones six months after the tragedy. In all of the turmoil, the media come to the town and criticize its Amish leaders for forgiving the shooter and supporting his widow, Amy Roberts, portrayed by Tammy Blanchard.

The mother of one of the victims, Ida Graber, portrayed by Kimberly Williams-Paisley, also struggles with the notion of forgiveness and even considers leaving the only life she's ever known. But she eventually re-embraces her faith.

The cast is memorable and the story is simply unforgettable, but it could have been a better movie, overall, if a brief re-enactment of the shooting had been included.

While the movie premiered on Lifetime Movie Network in March,

it will be released on DVD and Blu-ray on Sept. 14.

What If ...

Director Dallas Jenkins

Are you ready for a tale of hope, second chances and what is truly important in life? Then watch the movie "What If ...," which follows in the tradition of "It's a Wonderful Life" and "The Family Man," telling the story of a man whose glimpse into what he's missing reminds him of what he truly wants.

The movie focuses on a decision Ben Walker, played by Kevin Sorbo, made 15 years ago. Ben left his college sweetheart, Wendy, portrayed by Kristy Swanson, to pursue a lucrative business opportunity. Now on the verge of marriage to an equally materialistic woman, he is visited by an angelic

mechanic named Mike, played by John Ratzenberger. Mike tells Ben he needs to see what his life would have been like had he followed God's calling.

Suddenly Ben finds himself married to Wendy with two daughters. The family seems happy. In his vision, everyone is getting ready for church on a Sunday morning and he's scheduled to give his first sermon as the new pastor at a local church. But if Ben wants to obtain this life, then he must first learn to appreciate the value of faith and family and perhaps he'll rediscover the love of his life.

It is the best family film of the year. "What If ..." is in select theaters now. Visit www.thewhatifmovie.com for a list of theaters and to find out how to bring the movie to your area.

BWAid to help Pakistan flood victims

An initial sum of \$10,000 has been granted by Baptist World Aid (BWAid), the relief development arm of the Baptist World Alliance, to assist flood victims in Pakistan.

The funds, which will be used to meet medical, food and shelter needs, will be disbursed through BMS World Mission, a British Baptist missions organization, and partners. Additional sums may be given to the Interfaith League Against

Poverty, which is working with the National Baptist Church of Pakistan.

"The Baptist World Alliance is deeply moved by the level of suffering of the Pakistani people at this time," said Paul Montacute, director of BWAid. "We ask all Baptists to remember the country and people of Pakistan in their prayers and offer practical expressions of help."

Donations may be sent by going to <http://www.bwanet.org>. (BWA)

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'Musicianaries'

Former 'American Idol' contestant takes gospel, music to Chile

Sean Michel smiled through his distinctive, foot-long beard as he slid the guitar strap over his shoulder and greeted the crowd at El Huevo nightclub with what little Spanish he knows. The former "American Idol" contestant and his band then erupted into the sounds of Mississippi Delta blues-rock.

But unlike other musicians who played that night, the Sean Michel band sang about every person's need for God and the salvation that comes only through faith in Jesus Christ.

"We came down [to Chile] to open doors that other ministries couldn't," said Jay Newman, Michel's manager. "To get in places that only a rock band could — to create a vision for new church-planting movements among the underground, disenfranchised subcultures of Chile."

The Sean Michel band recently traveled through central Chile playing more than 15 shows in bars, churches, schools and parks. The group consists of Southern Baptists Sean Michel, lead singer; Alvin Rapien, lead guitarist; Seth Atchley, bass guitarist; and Tyler Groves, drummer.

"Although we're a blues rock 'n' roll band, we're an extension of the church," Michel said. "We're kind of like 'musicianaries,' if you will."

The band formed after Michel and Newman met as students at Ouachita Baptist University (OBU) in Arkadelphia, Ark. While there, the two began recording and selling Michel's music as a way to raise money for missions trips to Africa and Asia.

'Rooted in missions'

"We were just trying to raise money for a missions trip, but we'd also seen God speaking to people through the music," Michel said. "So we were like, 'Well, maybe we need to do something with this,' and we became a music ministry. But it's always been rooted in missions and ... in the Great Commission."

Michel graduated from OBU in 2001, Newman in 2004. In 2007, Newman talked Michel into auditioning for "American Idol." The exposure Michel received through the television show gained a wider audience for their ministry.

"The whole 'American Idol' thing was so weird," Michel said. "We just kind of went on a whim. But the Lord used it in a big way."

On their next missions trip to Asia, Michel and Newman found that being recognizable gave them access to venues they couldn't have entered before.

The band is now an official extension of First Southern Baptist Church, Bryant, Ark., where the musicians have long been active members. Every missions trip they have taken has involved working with International Mission Board (IMB) representatives.



ROCK BAND — Former 'American Idol' contestant Sean Michel (right) plays with his band for a small audience at a park in Santiago, Chile. Band member Seth Atchley (left) supports Michel on bass. BP photo

"With short-term missions trips, you can plan, but you just got to be willing for your plans to change," Michel said. When the band arrived in Chile, they were surprised to find that their schedule wasn't nearly as full as expected. Almost no public venues had booked shows, and many rock-wary churches had declined to host the band.

"The biggest barrier we had was the pastors," said Cliff Case, an IMB representative in Santiago, Chile, and a 1984 graduate of OBU. "The older pastors on two or three different occasions gave excuses for not doing it. It was a real frustration in that sense."

Disappointed by the lack of interest, the band prayed for God's help. They met Jose Campos — or Pépe, as the band came to know him. Campos works with music and youth for the Ministry of the Down and Out, an independent Christian ministry that seeks to reach the often-overlooked demographics of Santiago.

Campos was able to use his connections to book shows for the band in venues they wouldn't have known about otherwise.

Campos booked the show at El Huevo, possibly Chile's most popular club. Playing there has given the band musical credibility among Chilean rockers. And one Chilean church reported that a youth accept-

ed Christ after hearing Newman talk before a show. The band is contemplating a return tour next year.

Sharing the gospel through its songs is only the beginning for the Sean Michel band. Its vision is to be a catalyst to help churches — and missionaries — connect with the lost people of their communities.

"God is not saving the world through rock bands," Michel said. "He's saving the world through the church. And it will always be through the local body."

The band also wants to see churches take ministry beyond the church doors.

'Go ... into dark places'

"If you're going to want to legitimately reach lost people, you're going to have to get out," Michel said. "Go out into the dark places. Those are the places we need to be to reach out."

The band's ministry in Chile opened new doors for IMB representatives to reach the young, musical subculture of Chilean society.

"They laid the groundwork for more opportunities," Case said. "Now we have a network of who to talk to and how to get organized. We can focus on how to use the work they're doing so we can win people to the Lord and plant some churches." (BP)

PERSECUTED CHURCH

Compiled from Wire Services



Mob threats lead to closing of Indonesian church

SIPIROK, Indonesia — Police and local government officials joined forces with a Muslim mob to close a church in North Sumatra province July 30. Church leaders were forced to promise never to hold services at the site.

Pastor Leritio Panjaitan of the Binanga Huria Kristen Batak Protestant Church on the Gunung Tua-Sibuhan Highway in Siboris Dolok Village, Sipirok, North Sumatra province said government officials and mobs threatened to burn the facility if worship continued there. Panjaitan said rejection of the church was aided by the presence of a Quranic boarding school, Darul Hasnah Madrassa, which appeared in the vicinity six months ago. "I have received information that the leader of that 'madrassa' (Islamic school), Dr. Gong Matua Siregar, has incited citizens to reject the presence of the church," she said, adding that a local government official admitted to her that the head of the school had pressured him to close the church. Panjaitan added that the church had applied for a building and worship permit long ago but that authorities had not acted on it, and that all necessary administrative requirements had been fulfilled.

The head of the Assembly of Indonesian Muslim Clerics, Haji Fahri Harahap, has said it is clear that the residents of the area, long predominantly Muslim, do not want a church there. The closure means 80 people have lost their worship place. Local government officials and Muslim clerics warned church leaders that unless the congregation stopped meeting at the site, they would not be responsible if protestors burned the church.

Tanzanian court acquits evangelists of 'illegal preaching'

DAR ES SALAAM, Tanzania — A Tanzanian court acquitted two evangelists of "illegal preaching" Aug. 12. After 10 months of hearings, a Kariakoo area court in Dar es Salaam closed the case against Anglican Christians Eleutery Kobelo and Cecil Simbaultanga, who were arrested in October 2009 after Muslims invited them to participate in a religious debate at which the opponents did not appear, but authorities did.

The two evangelists maintained that no Muslims showed up to the neutral site of the supposed interfaith debate until Islamists arrived with government security agents who charged them with "using religious sermons to incite Muslims and Christians into viewing each other with suspicion." The accusers had claimed that the Christians' message that Jesus is God had annoyed Muslims and therefore disrupted a peaceful coexistence between those of the two faiths. Kobelo said the Muslims failed to show up in court to support their allegation of illegal preaching.

After the verdict, Christians shouting for joy greeted the evangelists as they left the courtroom, he said. "We are grateful that the court has done justice and made its ruling based on Tanzania's constitution that allows for freedom of religion and assembly," Kobelo said. "We thank the Christians worldwide for praying for us."

Baha'i faith leaders receive 20-year jail sentence in Iran

TEHRAN, Iran — Seven top leaders of the Baha'i faith who have been incarcerated in Iran since 2008 have each received jail sentences of 20 years after six months of court hearings that ended June 14, according to the Baha'i World News Service.

Bani Dugal, principal representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations, said lawyers plan to appeal the verdict. "The allegations are pretty irrational and aren't very reasonable," she said.

The seven leaders served Iran's minority Baha'i community, which hard-line clerics in Tehran consider an illegal sect. The seven leaders served as an ad hoc group to meet the needs of the estimated 350,000 Baha'is in Iran, said Dugal.

The Baha'i faith does not have an ordained clergy but rather elected leadership in each local community. Although unelected, "they were assisting the community" with administrative affairs, marriages and other rites, she said.

Of the two women and five men, six have been in jail since May 2008 and one since March 2008. They have had limited contact with outsiders except occasional visits with family, Dugal said. "The conditions are not good from what we hear," she said. BP